

before the end of this year. Despite a hawkish tone, FOMC participants revised GDP expectations lower and inflation expectations higher. A number of participants expressed worry about upside inflation risks. Finally, and most importantly for the yield outlook for internally managed money market funds, the Fed funds policy rate outlook showed FOMC participants beginning to support a liftoff from the zero lower bound sooner than previously forecasted. The median Fed funds rate by year-end 2022 rose to 25 basis points (from 12.5 basis points) in the latest Summary of Economic Projections ('SEP') release. Furthermore, FOMC members project a target rate of one percent by year-end 2023 versus 0.625 percent projection at the June meeting.

In what has become an inevitable periodic disruption to the financial markets, investors began pricing in a potential debt ceiling breach this summer, expecting that emergency measures would be exhausted by early November. That deadline moved forward when Secretary Yellen provided her only formal estimate of the date the US would run out of money without further debt issuance, October 18th. Yields spiked on Treasury bills maturing immediately before and after that date. The path towards higher bill rates echoed similar events in 2011 and 2013 until a compromise was reached on October 7th. In those instances, short-term bill yields peaked above 50 and 25 basis points respectively while bill yields remained firmly below 20 basis points this month. Such volatility has become commonplace during debt ceiling debates, however the temporary extension will only cement investor conviction that Congress will always act to extend the limit.

A \$480 billion increase to the debt limit will fund the federal government through December 3rd but a more durable solution still needs to be reached. More unusual ideas to address the debt ceiling such as minting of a trillion dollar platinum coin appear less likely now that Congress has ample time to incorporate an increase through reconciliation. Should no solution emerge by mid-November, US Treasuries will start pricing in the potential for US default again. Public funds investors could be faced with difficult choices such as whether to allow managers to hold US Treasuries during a technical default. Additionally, one or more of the major ratings agencies may take action on the US sovereign rating. S&P is currently the only rater to score the US Treasury below triple-A but Fitch and Moody's have indicated that a downgrade is possible due to political gridlock.